

the car. He was a classic target of potential criminal activity.

He carried a weapon, a firearm, when he traveled. When he stopped at night and went into a motel, he brought that weapon with him. You check in a motel by yourself, you are 77 years old, people are going to start looking at you. I don't think people who are in that situation need to wonder if they are committing a felony by having a gun to be able to defend themselves when they are in that situation.

Somebody else who comes to mind are all these truck drivers we see on the roads anytime we are on the interstate. These are independent contractors. They are people who are out there making a living the hard way. They constantly cross State boundaries. They have to worry about whether their truck is going to break down. They have to wonder sometimes, where they stop, whether they are going to be victimized if they sleep in the cabin of their own truck. Many can legally carry in their own State. Do they have to worry, if they pull over for the night in another State, if they try to defend themselves they are committing a felony? This is the type of situation I believe this legislation is attempting to address.

I believe it will have a beneficial effect. I believe strongly we need to work together in this body to address other situations of gun violence in this country. I am glad to add whatever insights I can have to do so, but I support this legislation and I intend to vote for it.

I yield the floor.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I yield 9 minutes to the Senator from New Jersey, Senator MENENDEZ.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey is recognized.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor saddened by the tragic death yesterday of Marc Dinardo, 1 of 5 of New Jersey's finest police officers shot last week by a gunman. He was killed, not by a law-abiding gun owner like millions of Americans, a sportsman or a hunter, but by one lone armed man, too willing to pull the trigger to kill another human being in cold blood.

Last night, or the night before, gunshots were fired in Jersey City. In Newark, three people were killed, the victims of gun violence.

The statistics are staggering. In 1 year, 30,896 people died from gun violence, 12,791 people were murdered, another 69,863 people survived gun injuries, 48,676 people were injured in a gun attack.

According to the Brady campaign, in 1 year, 20,784 American children and teens were shot in murders, assaults, suicides, accidents or by police intervention. Homicide was the second leading cause of death for young people ages 10 to 24 years old, and 84 percent of victims were killed by a firearm. Amazingly, firearm homicide is the second leading cause of death for young people ages 1 to 19.

These numbers are shocking. I think about what this amendment does, whom it affects, and I cannot help but ask who is it who feels the need to carry a concealed weapon and for what purpose? One must ask how we would ever want to permit, as a matter not of State but Federal law, those whose motives may not be pure to walk into a playground, school, crowded stadium in any State licensed under Federal law to carry a concealed weapon in their coat pocket or bag. Do we honestly believe that person will be the priest or the rabbi? Do we think it will be the mother taking her child to a school, saying: Let me think, I have the house keys, the cell phone—oh yes, the permit for the gun in my bag.

Will it be the law-abiding sportsmen using their rifles for target practice? Sportsmen don't need to conceal their weapons.

Whom do we think will benefit from this amendment? Whom do we think will carry a concealed Glock 39 through the streets of our cities, perhaps into a playground, stadium, church or mosque? It will not be that mother or that hunter. It will not be that sportsman. As Paul Helmke, the president of the Brady Campaign, so aptly pointed out, it will be something like Richard Poplowski, the White supremacist, armed with an AK-47, who allegedly murdered three Pittsburgh police officers on his front porch.

He was a concealed carry permit holder. It will be Michael McLendon, the suicide shooter who went on a rampage in Alabama, murdered ten people, then shot himself. He too was a concealed weapon carry permit holder.

It will be criminals such as Michael Iheme, charged with first-degree murder in the shooting death of his wife in St. Louis Park, MN. She had an active restraining order against her husband because of a history of domestic violence. After shooting his wife, he called 911 and said, "I killed that woman that messed my life up." He was a concealed carry permit holder as well.

We are being asked to seriously consider an amendment that would benefit those criminals, not their victims, an amendment that would override State laws and federally mandate States to recognize the concealed weapon permits of people such as these three notorious criminals, even though they may not be residents of that State, even though they may be legally barred from possessing weapons in that State.

Let's make no mistake, this amendment is a blatant infringement on States rights, a stealth repeal of States' hard-fought gun laws. It strips legislators and Governors duly elected by the people to represent the best interests of their constituents to make sound, competent, informed judgments about how best to regulate guns in their own State, to make those judgments based on the recommendations and input of law enforcement officials who know and understand the specific situation on the ground, on the street, in their cities, in their communities.

Even the Congressional Research Service has found this amendment would have a preemptive effect on State reciprocity laws. They said in their report:

This amendment is broad enough such that it would allow certain firearms that are banned from purchase or possession in one State to be brought into that State. For example, one could legally purchase, possess, and carry a concealed permit for a firearm that is banned in States such as California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York.

In my view, this would turn the clock back on reasonable, responsible gun laws that States such as New Jersey have passed to protect us from men like Richard Poplowski, Michael McLendon, and Michael Iheme. On the contrary, common sense, logic, reason, rationality, good judgment all say that that amendment will make our streets less safe.

And, contrary to the usual approach of my Republican colleagues to maximize States rights, this amendment will trample the right of States to pass their own laws that keep guns out of the hands of criminals.

Too many times, for too long, we have seen blood on our streets from senseless, pointless, lethal gun violence. We have tried, in our States and in this Chamber, to mitigate it. We have tried in our own ways to stop it. We have all been outraged at those who, in language, attitude, and demeanor, seem to accept it as part of American culture. I do not accept it as such.

We cannot stand down from battle being waged by law enforcement in every city and State against gun violence in our streets. Our charge, our solemn responsibility, is to end the violence, not add to it. There are too many guns on our streets as it is, but there are also too many people willing to use them.

Let's not make it easier to carry a concealed weapon against the wishes of the people of a State whose elected representatives express their will and say, not in our State, to blithely, legally have a Federal mandate that would permit them to cross State lines into your neighborhood or my neighborhood.

The evidence is before us in the names of Richard Poplowski, Michael McLendon, and Michael Iheme, all of whom had permits to carry a concealed weapon. If their States want to permit it, fine, but why should they come into my State and create the opportunity to murder some innocent family when my State, my government, my legislature has determined that, in fact, there is a better way to protect our citizens.

When we go down this road, it is a slippery slope. Some day, some Federal issue will come in your State and you will not want the Federal Government to tell your State how to protect your citizens. If you permit this to happen today, then it will happen tomorrow in a way that you will not like. That is a dangerous precedent. That is a precedent I do not think we want.